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CAMBODIA: Prime Minister Lon Nol appears determined to assume the position of president under a new constitution to be promulgated this month.

Despite misgivings of some important political leaders, Lon Nol is moving ahead with plans that involve the resignation of Chief of State Cheng Heng and a possible major cabinet reshuffle. He is now considering several imaginative formulas that will serve to put a legal stamp on the changes without necessitating a prior referendum or election. The most likely approach will be a provision in the new constitution naming Lon Nol as interim president until new elections can be held.

Lon Nol is pushing for promulgation of the new constitution on 18 March, the second anniversary of Sihanouk's ouster. He has already asked the able and energetic In Tam to serve as prime minister under the new constitution. Tam, who served as a deputy prime minister until Lon Nol fired him last year for being too independent, will not have much latitude in the new post, but he seems nevertheless inclined to accept it.

In the face of Lon Nol's determination, his political critics are giving ground. Prime Minister Delegate Sirik Matak,

[redacted] has the most to lose in the shake-up, apparently will acquiesce. He will be relegated to the relatively powerless vice presidency.

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Although the sometimes enigmatic Lon Nol may have some personal reason for aspiring to be the Khmer Republic's first president, his moves also appear to be founded on solid considerations of power politics. If he is able to establish himself in the new and powerful position of president without testing his waning popularity at the ballot box, Lon Nol will have convincingly re-established predominance over his political opponents, who only three months ago were pressing hard for his resignation.

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GUATEMALA-UK: The Arana government is expected to react sharply to London's decision to increase troop strength in British Honduras.

The Guatemalan cabinet has been meeting in emergency session to plan strategy after being informed by Britain that the battalion-sized force currently on maneuvers in the colony will not be reduced as planned to the normal garrison level of approximately 250 men. Instead, the British will maintain an anti-aircraft capability and replace the Grenadier Guards Battalion with companies of Gurkha infantry.

The Guatemalans have already characterized the decision as an overt act of provocation, and Foreign Minister Herrera told the US ambassador on Thursday evening that Guatemala "cannot negotiate with a gun at its head." Herrera was particularly upset by the British intention to publicize the troop increase, probably on Monday, and observed that this would put the Arana government in an extremely difficult position.

This British initiative is largely the result of fear of a Guatemalan surprise attack and the Defense Ministry's judgment that the normal garrison does not serve to deter Guatemalan adventurism and would not be capable of providing an adequate defense. The British apparently also believe that a stronger military posture would provide bargaining leverage to persuade Guatemala to negotiate a settlement of its claim to the colony.

The Guatemalan reaction may be the reverse of British hopes, however, and Arana may find himself forced to adopt a more, rather than less, belligerent stance. Arana might increase military expenditures, step up military preparedness, and augment Guatemalan troop strength along the British Honduras border. Although the British will probably continue efforts to arrange a ministerial-level meeting, they will be unable to relieve the developing tensions as long as they refuse to reconsider their decision.

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PAKISTAN: The dismissals of the army and air force commanders remove the two military officers most closely associated with Bhutto's accession to the presidency.

President Bhutto yesterday "accepted" the resignations of Lieutenant General Gul Hasan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan and relieved them of their commands effective immediately. As successors, the President chose Lieutenant General Tikka Khan and Air Vice Marshal Zafar Ahmad Chaudhary. Tikka Khan, who achieved international notoriety in 1971 as martial law administrator for East Pakistan in the early months of the army crackdown in that province, has been described as a tough, pragmatic, and highly competent field commander, favorably disposed toward the US. Less is known of Chaudhary, who has recently been managing director of Pakistani International Airlines, but he rose rapidly through the ranks in the Pakistani Air Force. He has been described as pro-Chinese.

Before he assumed power last December, Bhutto was on friendly terms with both Gul Hasan and Rahim Khan, in part, at least, because of their opposition to the policies of the previous government. One of Bhutto's first acts as President was to appoint Gul Hasan as army commander and reconfirm Rahim in the top air force post. Recently, however, there have been indications of strains developing between Bhutto and Gul Hasan. These strains were seriously exacerbated by the army commander's refusal on 24 February to send troops to Lahore to maintain law and order during a police strike in that city as requested by Bhutto. There is less evidence of a rift between Bhutto and Rahim Khan,

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Bhutto's action also may be related to the growing controversy between himself and the Pathan political leader in the Northwest Frontier Province, Khan Abdul Wali Khan. Both Rahim Khan and Gul Hasan

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